



NEWS RELEASE

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82ND MED. FAMILIES MEET FACE-TO-FACE VIA SATELLITE

By Mike Heronemus
Editor

Sixteen Fort Riley families spoke to loved ones deployed to Iraq face-to-face Aug. 6, thanks to efforts of the unit's rear detachment, the Freedom Call Foundation and Kansas State University communications experts.

Members of the 82nd Medical Company (Air Ambulance) spent 30 minutes talking via video teleconferencing time set up via satellite by Chief Warrant Officer Gary Doak, the Rear Detachment commander; John Harlow II, executive director of the Freedom Call Foundation, and communications staff at the Educational Communications Center in Robert Dole Hall on the KSU campus.

It was the second time in two months 82nd Med. Co. family members could talk with deployed spouses, Doak said. He arranged for new people to talk with spouses this month so no one would be repeating. But, "I have three repeats on standby," he said.

Calling times were scheduled beginning at 8 a.m. The calls went to the U.S. Marine Corps unit in Al Asaad that the Fort Riley helicopter company is supporting during this deployment.

The first session of video teleconference calls was scheduled early in July, Doak said. Satellite problems cut short one family member's call, so she was given a chance to make a call this time, he said.

The VTC gave Sgt. Leon Martinez the chance to share his son, Joshua's, fourth birthday in person.

Amy Heine showed up with her three daughters, 6-year-old Stella, 2-year-old Ava and 1-year-old Jorja, for the 9 a.m. call. She and husband, Capt. William Heine, communicate almost daily via e-mail and by phone about every other day, she said, but she was glad for the VTC opportunity.

"It was great, especially for the kids to see him," she said. It was good for her husband, too, she said. "He got to see them moving around and how tall they've grown."

Stella acted more bashful than normal, her mother said, but she told her father about the school supplies she had to have for first grade, mom reported after the call.

“He said he wants to jump on the trampoline with me when he gets home,” Stella was finally coaxed to say.

Mom explained that she and the girls had surprised daddy with a trampoline when he came home in June for rest and recuperation leave. “They did a lot of jumping on it then,” she said.

Heine said she wasn’t surprised that the company jumped at the chance to set up the VTC calls. “They’re always setting up children’s activities. We have an FRG (Family Readiness Group) meeting each month and dustoff dinners monthly,” she said.

The dustoff dinners allow the stay-behind spouses to have dinner together and just talk and enjoy some time together, she explained.